

A  
RELATION  
OF THE FEARE-  
FVLL ESTATE OF

*Francis Spira, in the  
yeare, 1548.*

*K B X*

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*The backslider in heart shall be filled with his  
owne waies, Proy. 14. 14.*

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1640.

RECORDS  
OF THE  
FIVE

AND  
1842

43.

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127







## A Preface.

**F**Or truth of this History ensuing, besides circumstances of place, person, time, occasion; so exactly observed; I referre my selfe to the Relation of those Godly men, who in severall languages have manifested to the world the severall passages thereof: and although I am not ignorant, that at the first they were not only not credited, but also discredited and slandered, by such as found them to be a Blur to the Romane Profession, yet they lost not their lustre thereby, but being acquitted by many Compurgators of severall Nations, and some of the Romish Religion, being all of them spectators of this Tragedie; it oc-  
A 2 cationed

## A Preface.

caſioned not only a further mani-  
feſtation and confirmation of the  
truth, but alſo a large & more fre-  
quent confluence, to ſee that which  
they had formerly only heard of.  
This partly appeareth out of the  
ſucceeding Story; but more fully  
out of an Apology written by Ver-  
gerius Biſhop of Juſtinople, who  
was accuſed for diſperſing the ſame  
of this Example to the ſtaine of  
Popery, in which Apology to N.  
Rottan, Suffragan of Padua, is  
ſhortly and plainly declared, what  
was ſaid, what was done, and who  
were preſent. If that it be deman-  
ded, what mooved mee to compile  
this Treatiſe; Spira--tell them that  
it ſhould teach feare and reverence,  
and indeed among all thoſe that  
come to ſee him, few or none re-  
turnes unſhaken. Vergerius in his  
firſt Epiſtle ſaith; I would faine  
goe ſee him again, but I exceedingly  
feare

## A Preface.

feare and tremble: and in his *A*-  
pologie saith, it is such a rare ex-  
ample, as I would willingly goe to  
the furthest parts of the world to  
heare or see the like. The Lady  
Jane to her Fathers Chaplaine  
(that had falne into Spira's sinne )  
saith, remember the lamentable e-  
state of Spira. I acknowledge that  
there hath beene formerly a Booke  
published in our Mother tongue,  
concerning this subject, but as farre  
as I can learne (for I could never  
yet obtaine to see any one of them)  
it was nothing so large and various  
as this present Treatise, and as I  
have heard, a translation of one'y  
one of the Tractates, from whence I  
have gathered this present Dis-  
course in part. Concerning my care  
and fidelitie in this businesse, it is  
such as I may truely say without  
changing of colour, that there is not  
one sentence of all this Worke attri-

## A Preface.

*buted unto the person of Spira, but it hath it warrant, either from the Epistles of Vergerius and Gribaldus, Professours of the Law in Padua, or from the discourses of Henry Scringer a Scotish man, Sigismund Gelons a Transilvanian, and Mart. Bocha a Divine of Basill: neither have I taken any other Libertie then as a Relation to weave the aforesaid Discourses one within another, so as those which under severall Writers, were before counted severall, are now by my indeavours reduced into one intire History, connexed by due succession of time and occasion, as punctually as could be aimed at, by the circumstances noted in the Writings of those holy and learned men before named.*

N. B.

*April. 5,  
1638.*

*Inprimatur  
Tho: Wykes.*





A  
RELATION OF  
the fearefull estate of  
FRANCIS SPIRA.

**I**N the yeare 1548.  
when the glori-  
ous Sunne of the  
Gospel was but newly ri-  
sen in *Europe*, in the dayes  
of the raigne of *Edward*  
the Sixth of that name  
King of *England*: In the  
Territory, and under the  
Iurisdiction of the Citie  
of *Venice*, being the very  
border of *Italy*, in the

A 4 towne



*A Relation of*

towne of *Cittadella*, lived one *Francis Spira*, a Civill Lawyer, an advocate of greate rank and esteeme being of knowne learning, & eloquence; of great experience; of carriage circumspect and severe; his speech grave & composed, his countenance sharpe and austere; every way befitting that authoritie whereunto hee was advanced, endowed with outward blessings, of wife, & eleven children, & wealth in abundance: what his worst parts were, I have no other war-

warrant, then his owne words, which (if not tainted overmuch with the bitternesse of a desperate minde, and bearing the countenance rather of passion, then of sober confession) may seeme to adde a period to all further commendations.

*I was (saide hee) excessively covetous of money; and accordingly I applyed my selfe to get by injustice corrupting justice by deceit inventing tricks to delude justice: good causes I either defended deceitfully, or sold them to the adversary per-  
A 5 diously;*

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vill Lawyer, an advocate  
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outward blessings, of  
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war-

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*I was (said hee) excessively covetous of money, and accordingly I applyed my selfe to get by injustice corrupting justice by deceit: inventing tricks to delude justice: good causes I either defended deceitfully, or sold them to the adversary perfi-*  
*A 5* *diously;*

*A Relation of*

*diously ; ill causes I maintained with all my might ; I wittingly opposed the knowne truth ; and the trust committed unto me, I either betrayed or perverted. Thus having worn out forty foure yeares , or there abouts , and the news of the new, or rather newly revived opinions of *Luther* coming into those parts , represented an object of noveltie unto him ; who being as desirous to know as he was famous for knowledge ; suffered not these wandring opinions to passe unexamined , but search*



searching into the Scriptures, and into all bookes of Controversie that hee could get, both old and new, and finding more then fame or opinion, he began to taste their nature so well, as he entertaines, loves, and owne them at length; and with such zeale, as he became a professor; yea a teacher of them, first to his wife, children, and family, and after to his friends, and familiar acquaintance; & in comparifon, seemed to neglect all other affaires; intending ever to presse  
this

*A Relation of*

this maine point, that *We must wholly, and onely depend on the free, and unchangeable love of God in the death of Christ, as the onely sure way to Salvation;* And this was the summe of all his discourse, and this continued for the space of fixe yeares, or thereabouts; even so long as this fire could keepe it selfe within private wals; but at length it brake forth into publique meetings; so as the whole Province of *Padua* dawned by the lustre thereof. The Clergie finding the  
trade

Francis Spira.

7

trade of their pardons to decay; and their Purgatory to waxe cold, began to bestirre themselves; glosing their actions first with calumnious aspersions upon the whole profession, then more plainly striking at *Spira* with grievous accusations: And to effect their purpose, some promise labour, others favour, some advice others maintenance; all joyne to devide, either his soule from his body, or both from God.

Now as *John Casa*  
the Popes Legate resident  
at

*A Relation of*

at *Venice*, being by birth a *Florentine*; and one that wanted neither malice against those of this way, nor craftines to effect his malicious purposes: To him these men repaire with outcries against *Spira*; that hee was the man that condemned the received rites of the Church, deluded the Ecclesiasticall power, and scandalized the policie thereof; one of no meane ranke; being a man of Account and authoritie, and thereunto, learned in the Scriptures, elegant in speech; and in  
one

one word, a dangerous *Lutheran*; having also many disciples, and therefore not to be despised.

At this began the Legate to cast his eye on the terrible alteration that lately had hapned in *Germany*; where, by the means of one onely *Luther*, the Romish Religion had suffered such a blow, as that it could neither bee cured by dissimulation, nor defended by power; but the Clergie must either mend their manners, or lose their dignities: on the other side,



side, when he saw how propense the common people inhabiting in the bordering countries of *Italy* were to entertain those new opinions, hee now thought it no time to dispute, or perswade, but with speed repaires to the *Senate*, and procures authoritie from them to send for *Spira*.

*Spira* by this time had considered with himselfe of the nature of his carriage, how evident and notorious it was, and therefore subject to be envied by such, as neither  
liked

liked his person nor Religion, he perceived that his opinions were neither retired nor speculative, but such as aymed at the overthrow of the *Romish* Faction, and at change of Policie, wherein at the best, he could expect but a bloudy victory, and that his enemies wanted neither power nor occasion to call him to account in Publique, when he must either Apostatize, and shamefully give his former life, yea his own conscience the lye, or indure the

the utmost malice of his deadly enemies , or forsake his wife , children , friends, goods, authoritie, yea , his deare Countrey, and betake himselfe to a forraigne people, there to endure a thousand miseries, that do continually waite upon a voluntary exile. Being thus distracted , and tossed in the restless waves of doubt , without guide to trust to, or haven to flye to for succour; on the sudden Gods Spirit assisting , he felt a calme , and began to discourse with himselfe in  
this

this manner :

*Why wandrest thou thus  
in uncertainties , unhappy  
man; cast away feare , put  
on thy shield , the shield of  
faith ; Where is thy wonted  
courage, thy goodnesse , thy  
constancie ? remember that  
Christs glorie lies at the  
stake , suffer thou without  
feare, and hee will defend  
thee, hee will tell thee what  
thou shalt answer ; hee can  
beat downe all danger, bring  
thee out of prison, raise thee  
from the dead : consider Pe-  
ter in the dungeon, the Mar-  
tyrs in the fire , if thou ma-  
kest a good confession, thou  
mayest*

mayest indeed goe to prison, or death, but an eternall reward in heaven remains for thee; What hast thou in this world comparable to eternall life, to everlasting happinesse? if thou dost otherwise, thinke of the scandall; (common people live by example, thinking what ever is done, is well done) feare the losse of peace and joy, feare hell, death, and eternall wrath; or if thy flesh be so strong, as to cause thee to doubt of the issue, flie thy countrie; get thee away, though never so far, rather then denie the Lord of Life.

Now



Now was *Spira* in reasonable quiet, being resolved to yeeld to these weightie reasons; yet holding it wisdome to examine all things, hee consults also with flesh and bloud; thus the battaile doth renew, and the flesh be-  
ginnes in this manner:

*'Bee well advised, fond man, consider reasons on both sides, and then judge: how canst thou thus overweene thine owne sufficiency, as thou neither regardest the examples of thy Progenitors; nor  
the*

the judgement of the whole Church; dost thou not consider what miserie this thy rashnesse will bring thee unto? thou shalt lose thy substance, gotten with so much care and travell, thou shalt undergoe the most exquisite torments that malice it selfe can devise, thou shalt bee counted an heretique of all: and to close up all, thou shalt die shamefully. What thinkest thou of the loathsome stinking dungeon, the bloody axe, the burning fagot, are they delightfull? Bee wise at length, and keepe thy life and honor; thou

thou maist live to do much good to good men, as God commands thee, thou maist be an ornament to thy Countrie: and put case thy Countries losse would bee of small esteeme with thee; Wilt thou bring thy friends also into danger? thou hast begotten children, wilt thou now cut their throats, & inhumane-ly butcher them, which may in time bring honor to their Countrie, glorie to God, helpe and furtberance to his Church? goe to the Legate, weake man, freely confesse thy fault, and helpe all these miseries. Thus did the  
cares

cares of this world, and the deceitfullnesse of riches, choke the good Seed that was formerly sowne; so as fearing, hee faints, and yeelds unto the allurements of this present world, & being thus blinded he goes to the Legate at *Venice*, and salutes him with this news.

*Having for these divers yeares entertained an opinion concerning some Articles of faith, contrary to the Orthodox and received judgement of the Church; and uttered many things against the authoritie of the Church*

Church of Rome; and the  
universall Bishop I hum-  
bly acknowledge my fault,  
and errour, and my folly in  
misleading others: I there-  
fore yeeld my self in all obe-  
dience to the Supreme Bi-  
shop, into the bosome of the  
Church of Rome; never to  
depart again from the Tra-  
ditions and Decrees of the  
holy Sea: I am heartily sor-  
ry for what is past; and I  
humbly begge pardon for so  
great an offence.

The Legate perceiving  
Spira to faint, he pursues  
him to the utmost; hee  
causeth a recitation of all

B his



his Errours to be drawne  
in writing, together with  
the Confession annexed  
to it, and commands *Spi-  
ra* to subscribe his name  
there, which accordingly  
he did; then the Legate  
commands him to return  
to his owne Towne; and  
there to declare this Con-  
fession of his, and to ac-  
knowledge the whole do-  
ctrine of the Church of  
*Rome* to be holy, and true;  
and to abjure the Opini-  
ons of *Luther*, and other  
such Teachers, as false,  
and hereticall: *Man knows  
the beginnings of sinne, but*  
*who*

*who bounds the issues thereof?* Spira having once lost footing, goes downe a-  
maine, he cannot stay, nor  
gain-say the Legate; but  
promiseth to accomplish  
his whole will and plea-  
sure; he soone addresseth  
himselſe for his Journey,  
and being onward in the  
way, bethinks himselſe  
of large spoiles hee had  
brought away from the  
Conflict with the Le-  
gate: what glorious te-  
stimonie he had given of  
his great faith, and con-  
stancie in Christs cause:  
and to be plaine, how im-

piously hee had denyed Christ, and his Gospell at Venice; and vvhhat he promised to do further in his owvn Countrey; and thus partly vvith fear, and partly vvith shame being confounded; he thought he heard a voice speaking unto him in this maner.

Spira, *What doest thou here? whither goest thou? hast thou unhappy man, given thy hand-writing to the Legate at Venice; yet see thou doest not seal it in thine owne Countrey: doest thou indeed thinke eternall life so meane, as that thou preferrest*

ferrest this present life before it? doest thou well in preferring wife and children before Christ? is the windie applause of the people, better indeed then the glorie of God; and the possession of this worlds good more deare to thee, then the salvation of thine owne Soule? is the small use of a moment of time more desireable, then eternall wrath is dreadfull? Thinke with thy selfe what Christ endured for thy sake; is it not equal thou shouldest suffer somewhat for him? Remember, man, that the sufferings of this present  
B 3 life,



life, are not comparable to the glory that shal be revealed: if thou sufferest with him, thou shalt also reigne with him: thou canst not answer for what thou hast already done; neverthelesse, the gate of mercy is not quite shut, take heed that thou heapest not sinne upon sinne, lest thou repent when it will be too late.

Now was Spira in a wilderness of doubts, not knowing which way to turn him, nor what to doe, yet being arrived in his owne Counrey, and amongst his friends, with shame



shame enough hee relates  
what he had done, and  
what he had further pro-  
mised to do; and how  
the terrors of God on the  
one side, and the terrour  
of this world on the o-  
ther side, did continually  
racke him; and therefore  
hee desired of them ad-  
vise in this so doubtfull a  
case: his friends upon  
small deliberation an-  
swered; that it was requi-  
site hee should take heed  
that hee did not in any  
wise betray his wife and  
children, and all his  
friends into danger, see-  
ing

ing that by so small a matter as the reciting of a little Schedule, which might bee done in lesse space then half an houre, he might both free himself from present danger, and preserve many that depended upon him; adding moreover, that he could get no Credit in relenting from that which he had already in greatest part performed before the Legate at *Venice*, and that in the perfect accomplishing thereof, little or no discredit could arise, more then what by the former

former action alreadie he had sustained : on the other side , if he did not performe his promise made to the Legate , he could neither discharge himselfe of the shame which he had alreadie incurred ; nor avoid farre more heavie and insupportable injuries , then probably he should have endured , if he had persisted obstinately in his former Opinions.

This was the last blow of the battell , and *Spira* utterly overcome , goes to the *Prator* , and proffers

to performe his foresaid  
promise made to the Le-  
gate, who in the meane  
time had taken order to  
have all things readie, and  
had sent the instrument  
of abjuration signed by  
*Spira*, to the *Prætor*, by  
the hands of a certaine  
Priest. All that night the  
miserable man ware out  
with restlesse cares, with-  
out any minute of rest;  
the next morning being  
come, he gets up, and be-  
ing readie, he desperately  
enters into the publique  
Congregation, where  
Masse being finished, in  
the



the presence of friends  
and enemies, and of the  
whole Assemblie; being  
by estimation neere two  
thousand people; yea,  
and of Heaven it selfe, he  
recites that infamous ab-  
juration, word for word,  
as it was written: it be-  
ing done, he was fined at  
thirtie pieces of gold,  
which he presently paid:  
five whereof were given  
to the Priest that brought  
the abjuration, the other  
twentie five were im-  
ploied towards the ma-  
king of a Shryne to put the  
Eucharist in; then was he  
sent.



sent home restored to his Dignities; goods, wife, and children: No sooner was he departed, but he thought he heard a direfull voice, saying to him; *Thou wicked wretch, thou hast denied me, thou hast renounced the covenant of thy obedience, thou hast broken thy vow; hence Apostates, bear with thee the sentence of thy eternall damnation:* he trembling and quaking in body and minde, fell down in a swoon; reliefe was at hand for the body, but from that time forwards he never found  
any

any peace or ease of his minde; but continuing in uncessant torments, he professed that he was captived under the revenging hand of the great God: that he heard continually that fearfull sentence of Christ that just Iudge: that he knew he was utterly undone: that he could neither hope for grace, nor Christs intercession with God the Father in his behalfe: thus was his fault ever heavy on his heart, and ever his judgement before his eies.

Now began his friends  
some

some of them to repent  
too late of their rash  
counsell; others not look-  
ing so high as the judge-  
ment of God, laid all the  
blame upon his Melan-  
cholicke constitution;  
that overshadowing his  
judgement, wrought in  
him a kinde of madnesse:  
everie one censured as his  
fancie led him, yet for re-  
medie all agreed in this,  
to use both the whole-  
some helpe of Physicians,  
and the pious advise of  
Divines, and therefore  
thought it meet to convey  
him to *Paduana*, an Univer-  
sitie

sitie of note, where plenty  
of all maner of meanes  
was to be had: this they  
accordingly did, both  
with his wife, children,  
and whole familie; others  
also of his friends accom-  
panying him: and being  
arrived at the house of  
one *James Ardin*, in Saint  
*Leonards* Parish, they  
sent for three Physicians  
of most note, who upon  
due observation of the  
effects, and of other Sym-  
ptomes of his disease, and  
some private conference  
one with another, among  
themselves, returned their  
verdict



verdict in this maner,  
*viz.* That they could not  
discern that his body was  
afflicted with any danger  
or distemper originally  
from it self, by reason of  
the over-ruling of any hu-  
mour; but that this Mala-  
die of his did arise from  
some grief, or passion of  
his minde, which being  
overburthened, did so op-  
presse the spirits, as they  
wanting free passage, stir-  
red up many ill humours,  
whereof the body of man  
is full; & these ascending  
up into the braine, trou-  
bled the fancie, shadowed  
the



the seat of the judgement,  
and so corrupted it: this  
was the state of his dis-  
ease, and that outward  
part that was visible to  
the eye of nature, this they  
endeavoured to reforme  
by purgation, either to  
consume, or at least to di-  
vert the course of those  
humours from the brain;  
but all their skill effected  
nothing, which Spira  
noting, said: Alas poore  
men, how farre wide are you;  
do you thinke that this di-  
sease is to be cured by pu-  
rifications? beleene mee there  
must bee another manner of  
medi-

medicine, it is neither potions, plaisters, nor drugges, that can help a fainting soul cast down with sense of sinne, and the wrath of God; it is onely Christ that must be the Physician, and the Gospel the sole Antidote.

The Physicians easily beleaved him, after they had understood the whole truth of the matter, and therfore they wished him to seeke some spirituall comfort. By this time the fame of this man was spread over all Padua, and the neighbour Countries partly for that hee was a  
man.

man of Esteeme, partly because as the disease, so the occasion was especially remarkable; for this was not done in a corner: so as daily there came multitudes of all sorts to see him: some out of curiositie onely to see and discourse: some out of a pious desire to trie all meanes that might reduce him to comfort again, or at least to benefit themselves, by such a spectacle of miserie, and of the justice of God. Amongst these, *Paulus Vergerius* Bishop of *Iustinopolis*, &  
*Mattheus*

*Matthews Gribaulds*, deserve especially to be named, as the most principall labourers for this mans comfort. They finde him now about fiftie yeers of age, neither affected with the dotage of old age, nor vvith the unconstant head-strong passion of youth; but in the strength of his experience and judgement; in a burning heat calling excessively for drinke; yet his understanding active, quick of apprehension, vvittie in discourse above his ordinarie maner, and judiciously



judiciously opposite his friends laboured him by all faire means to receive some nourishment, which he obstinately gain-saying, they forcibly infused some liquid sustenance into his mouth, most of which he spit out againe, exceedingly chafing, and in this fretting mood of his, said: As it is true that *all things work for the best* Rom 8.28 to those that love God; so to the wicked all are contrary: for whereas a plentiful off-spring is the blessing of God, and his reward, being a stay to the weak estate  
of



*A Relation of*

*of their aged parents ; to me they are a cause of bitterness and vexation, they do strive to make me tire out this miserie ; I would faine be at an end, I deserve not this dealing at their hands ; O that I were gone from hence, that some body would let out this weary Soul!*

His friends saluted him, and asked him, what he conceived to bee the cause of his disease; forthwith he brake out into a lamentable discourse of the passages formerly related, and that with such passionate Elocution, that  
he

he caused many to weep  
and most tremble. They  
contrarily to comfort  
him, propounded many  
of Gods promises record-  
ed in the Scripture; and  
many examples of Gods  
mercie: *My sinne* (said he)  
*is greater than the mercy of*  
*God.* Nay, answered they,  
the mercy of God is above  
all sin; God would have  
all men to be saved: *It is*  
*true* (quoth he) *he would*  
*have all that he hath elected,*  
*to be saved; he would not*  
*have damned reprobates to*  
*be saved; I am one of that*  
*number; I know it, for I*  
*willingly,*

willingly, and against my  
knowledge denyed Christ;  
and I feele that he hardens,  
and will not suffer me to  
hope.

After some silence, one  
asked him whether he  
did not beleeye that Do-  
ctrine (so hee trut) for  
which hee was accused  
before the Legate; hee  
answered; I did beleeeve it  
when I denyed it, but now  
I neither beleeeve that, nor  
the Doctrine of the Ro-  
mane Church; I beleeeve  
nothing, I have no faith, no  
trust, no hope; I am a Re-  
probate like Cain, or Iudas,  
who

who casting away all hope of mercy, fell into despair; and my friends doe mee great wrong, that they suffer me not to go to the place of unbelievers as I justly deserve.

Heere they beganne sharply to rebuke him; requiring, and charging him that in any wise he did not violate the mercie of God; to vvhich he answered: *The mercie of God is exceeding large and extends to all the elect; but not to mee, or any like to mee, who are sealed up to wrath: I tell you I deserve it, my owne conscience*

Rom. 2.  
13.



*condemnes me; what needeth any other Iudge? Christ came (said they) to take away sinne, and calling for a book, they read unto him the passion of Christ, and coming to his nayling to the Crosse, Spira said: This indeed is comfortable to such as are elected, but as for me wretch, they are nothing but grieve and torment, because I contemned them. Thus roaring for grief, and tossing himself up & down upon the bed as he lay, he intreated them to read no more: As Gribauldus was coming  
to*



to see him, *Vergerius* said  
to *Spira*, Deare Sir here is  
Doctor *Gribauldus*, a  
godly and faithfull friend  
of yours, Come to see you:  
*He is welcome* (said hee)  
*but hee shall finde mee ill:*  
*Gribauldus* replyed, Sir,  
this is but an illusion of  
the devill, who doth what  
he can to vexe you; but  
turne you to God with  
your whole heart, and he  
is ready to shew you mer-  
cie; the earth you know is  
full of his mercie; it is He  
that hath said, that as *often*  
*as a sinner repents of his*  
*sinne, he will remember his*

*finnes no more.* Consider this in the example of *Peter* that was Christs familiar, and an Apostle; and yet denied him thrice with an oath, and yet God was mercifull unto him: consider the Thiefe that spent his whole life in wickednesse, and for all that, did not God graciously respect him in the last minute of his life? Is the Lords hand now shortned that it cannot save? to this *Spira* answered; „ If *Peter* grieved, and repented, it was because Christ beheld him „ with

„ with a mercifull eye;  
„ and in that he was par-  
„ doned, it vvas not be-  
„ cause he wept, but be-  
„ cause God was gracious  
„ to him : but God re-  
„ spects not me, and there-  
„ fore I am a reprobate : I  
„ feel no comfort can en-  
„ ter into my heart, there  
„ is no place there but  
„ onely for torments and  
„ vexings of spirit : I tell  
„ you my case is properly  
„ mine own, no man ever  
„ was in the like plight,  
„ and therefore my estate  
„ is fearfull.

Then roaring out in

C 3

the

the bitternesse of his spirit, said: *It is a fearfull thing to fall into the hands of the living God: the violence of his passion and action sutable, did amaze many of the beholders; insomuch as some of them said with a whispering voice, that he was possessed; hee over-hearing it, said: Doe you doubt it? I have a whole Legion of devils that take up their dwellings within me, and possesse me as their owne; and justly too, for I have denyed Christ. Whether did you that willingly*  
ly

ly or not? (said they.) *That  
is nothing to the purpose* (said  
Spira) *Christ saith, who so-  
ever denies me before men,  
him will I deny before my  
Father which is in heaven:  
Christ will not be denied, no  
not in word; and therefore  
it is enough, though in heart  
I never denied him.*

They observing his di-  
stemper to arise from the  
sense and horreur of the  
paines of hell, asked him  
whether he thought there  
were worse paines then  
what he endured for the  
present; he said, that he  
knew *there were far worse*



Psal. 1.

paines then those that hee  
 then suffered: for the wic-  
 ked shall rise to their judge-  
 ment, but they shall not stand  
 in judgement: this I trem-  
 ble to thinke of: yet do I  
 desire nothing more, then  
 that I might come to that  
 place, where I may be sure  
 to feele the worst, and to be  
 freed from fear of worse to  
 come.

I but you are to consi-  
 der (said one) that those  
 opinions for which you  
 vvere accused before the  
 Legate vvere impious;  
 and therefore you are not  
 to thinke you denied  
 Christ,

Christ, but rather that you confessed him, acknowledging the infallible truth of the Catholike Church. Truly (said he) when I did deny those opinions, I did think them to be true, and yet I did denie them.

Go to (said others) now then beleeve that they are not. Now I cannot (said he) God will not suffer me to beleeve them, nor trust in his mercy: What would you have mee do? I would faine attain to this power, but cannot though I should presently bee burnt for it. But

C5 why

why doe you (said the o-  
 ther) esteeme this so grie-  
 vous a sinne, when as the  
 learned Legate constrain-  
 ed you to it, which hee  
 surely would not have  
 done, if your former o-  
 pinions had not beene  
 Erroneous? no, good  
*Francis*, the devill besets  
 thee, let not therefore the  
 grievousnesse of thy sinne  
 (if any such bee) amaze  
 thee. „ You say right (*re-  
 „plied he*) the devill hath  
 „possessed mee, and God  
 „hath left me to his pow-  
 „er; for I finde I can nei-  
 „ther believe the Gospel,  
 „nor

„ nor trust in Gods mer-  
„ cie; I have sinned a-  
„ gainst the holy Ghost;  
„ and God by his im-  
„ mutable Decree, hath  
„ bound mee over to per-  
„ petuall punishment,  
„ without any hope of  
„ pardon; It is true that Rom. 9.  
11. and  
Rom. 4.  
„ the greatnes of sinne, or  
„ the multitude of them,  
„ cannot bind Gods mer-  
„ cie: all those many sins  
„ that in the former part  
„ of my life I have com-  
„ mitted, then did not so  
„ much trouble me, for I  
„ trusted that God would  
„ not lay them to my  
„ charge:

„ charge: but now ha-  
 „ ving sinned against the  
 „ holy Ghost; God hath  
 „ taken away from me all  
 „ power of repentance,  
 „ and now brings all my  
 „ finnes to remembrance,  
 „ and thus guiltie of one,  
 „ guilty of all. And there-  
 „ fore it is no matter whe-  
 „ ther my finnes be great  
 „ or small, few or many;  
 „ they are such as Christs  
 „ bloud, nor Gods mercie  
 „ belongs to mee: God  
 „ vwill have mercie on  
 „ vvhom hee vwill have  
 „ mercie; and vvhom he  
 „ will he hardneth; this is

Jam. 2.

10.

Rom. 9.

18.

„ it



„ it that gnaws my heart,  
„ he hath hardned mee;  
„ and I finde that he daily  
„ more and more doth  
„ harden me; and there-  
„ fore I am out of hope:  
„ I feele it, and therefore  
„ cannot but despaire: I  
„ tell you, there was never  
„ such a monster as I am;  
„ never vvas man alive a  
„ spectacle of so exceed-  
„ ing miserie: I knew  
„ that justification is to be  
„ expected by Christ, and  
„ I denied, and abjured  
„ it; to the end I might  
„ keepe this fraile life  
„ from aduersitie, and  
„ my

„ my children from po-  
„ vertie; and now behold,  
„ how bitter this life is to  
„ mee; and God onely  
„ knows, what shall be-  
„ come of this my familie;  
„ but surely no good is  
„ likely to betide it, but  
„ rather daily worse and  
„ worse; and such a ruine  
„ at the length as that one  
„ stone shal not be left on  
„ another.

But why should you  
(saide *Gribauldus*) conceit  
so deeply of your sinne,  
seeing you cannot but  
know that manie have  
denied Christ, yet never  
fell

fell into despaire? „ Well  
„ ( *said hee* ) I can see no  
„ ground of comfort for  
„ such, neither can I war-  
„ rant them from Gods  
„ revenging hand in  
„ wrath; though it plea-  
„ seth God yet to suffer  
„ such to be in peace: and  
„ besides, there wil a time  
„ of change come, & then  
„ they shall be thoroughly  
„ tried: and if it were  
„ not so, yet God is just  
„ in making mee an Ex-  
„ ample to others; and I  
„ cannot justly complain:  
„ there is no punishment  
„ so great but I have de-  
„ served.

„ served it, for this so  
„ heinous offence : I as-  
„ sure you it is no small  
„ matter to denie Christ,  
„ and yet it is more ordi-  
„ narie then commonly  
„ men doe conceive of :  
„ it is not a deniall made  
„ before a Magistrate as it  
„ is with mee; for as of-  
„ ten as a Christian doth  
„ dissemble the knowne  
„ truth, as often as hee  
„ approves of false vvor-  
„ ship, by presenting him-  
„ selfe at it, so often as  
„ hee doth not things  
„ worthy of his calling,  
„ or such things as are un-  
„ worthy

„vvorthy of his calling;  
„so often hee denies  
„Christ: thus did I, and  
„therefore am justly pu-  
„nished for it.

Your estate (quoth *Gri-  
boulden*) is not so strange  
as you make it; *Iob* vvas  
so farre gone, that hee  
complained God had set  
him as a marke against  
him: and *David* that vvas  
a man after Gods ovvne  
heart, complained often  
that God had forsaken  
him, and vvas become  
his enemy; yet both recei-  
ved comfort again: com-  
fort your selfe therefore,  
God



God will come at length,  
though he now seeme far  
off.

„ O Brother (answered  
„ *Spira*) I beleeve all this;  
„ the devils beleeve and  
„ tremble; but *David* was  
„ ever elected and deare-  
„ ly beloved of God; and  
„ though he fell, yet God  
„ took not utterly away  
„ his holy Spirit; and  
„ therefore was heard  
„ when he prayed, *Lord*  
„ *take not thy holy Spirit*  
„ *from mee*: but I am in  
„ another case, being ever  
„ accursed from the pre-  
„ sence of God: neither  
„ can

„ can I pray as he did, be-  
„ cause his holy Spirit is  
„ quite gone, and cannot  
„ be recalled; & therefore  
„ I know I shall live in  
„ continuall hardnesse so  
„ long as I live: O that I  
„ might feele but the least  
„ sense of the love of God  
„ to mee, though but for  
„ one small moment, as I  
„ now feele his heavie  
„ wrath that burnes like  
„ the torments of hell  
„ within me, and afflicts  
„ my Conscience with  
„ pangs unutterable! ve-  
„ rily desperation is hell it  
„ selfe.

Here

Heere Gribauldus said,  
I do verily belceve, *Spira*,  
that God having so se-  
verely chastised you in  
this life, correcteth you in  
mercie here, that he may  
spare you hereafter, and  
that he hath mercies seal-  
ed up for you in time to  
come.

Nay (said *Spira*) hence  
do I know that I am a repro-  
bate, because hee afflicteth  
mee with hardnesse of heart:  
Oh that my body had suffered  
all my life long, so that hee  
would bee pleased to release  
my soul, and ease my Consci-  
ence, this burthened Consci-  
ence!

Gri-

*Gribauldus* being desirous to ease his minde from the continuall meditation of his sinne; as also to sound how for the present he stood affected to the Romish Church; asked him what hee thought became of the soules of men so soone as they departed out of the bodie, to which hee answered.

*Although this be not so fully revealed in Scripture; yet I verily beleeve that the soules of the Elect go presently to the Kingdome of glory; and not that they sleep with*

*with the body as some do  
imagine.*

1. Sam. 2.

6.

Verie well; said one of  
the Spectators, why do  
the Scriptures then say,  
that God brings downe  
to hell, and raiseth up?  
seeing it cannot be meant  
of the estate of the soule  
after death, which as thou  
sayest, either goeth to  
heaven without change,  
or to hell without re-  
demption: it must be un-  
derstood of the estate of  
the soule in this life; like  
that wherein thou art at  
this present: and often-  
times we see that God  
suffers



suffers men to fall into the jaws of despair, and yet raiseth them up again, and therefore despair not, but hope; it shall bee even thus with thee in his good time.

*This is the work, (quoth Spira) this the labour; for I tell you, when I at Venice did first abjure my profession, and so, as it were, drew an Indenture, the Spirit of God often admonisht mee; and when at Cittadella, I did, as it were, set to my seale; the Spirit of God often suggested to me, Doe not write Spira, do not seale;*  
*yet*

yet I resisted the Holy Ghost, and did both; and at that very present I did evidently feele a wound inflicted in my very will, so although I can say, I would beleeve; yet can I not say, I will beleeve; God hath denyed me the power of will; and it befalls me in this my miserable estate, as with one that is fast in irons, and his friends coming to see him, doe pitie his estate, and doe perswade him to shake off his fetters, and to come out of his bonds; which God knows hee would faine doe, but cannot, this is my verie case;  
you

you perswade me to beleeve:  
how faine would I do it, but  
cannot? O now I cannot.

Then violently grasping  
his hands together, and  
raising himselfe up: Be-  
hold (said he) I am strong,  
yet by little and little I decay  
and consume, and my ser-  
vants would faine preserve  
this weary life; but at length  
the will of God must be done,  
and I shall perish miserably  
as I deserve: rejoyce ye righ-  
teous in the Lord; blessed <sup>Psal. 32.</sup>  
are you whose hearts the <sub>11.</sub>  
Lord hath mollified.

Then after some pause;  
It is wonderfull, I earnestly  
D desire

desire to pray to God with my heart, yet I cannot; I see my damnation, and I know my remedy is onely in Christ, yet I cannot set my selfe to lay hold on it; such are the punishments of the damned; they confesse what I confesse, they repent of their losse of heaven, they envie the Elect, yet their repentance doth them no good, for they cannot mend their wayes.

As he was thus speaking, he observed divers flies that came about him, and some lighted on him: Behold (said hee) now also



also \* *Belzebub* comes to  
his banquet, you shall short-  
ly see my end, and in me an  
example to many of the ju-  
stice & judgement of God.

\* Signifies  
the god of  
flies.

About this time came  
in two Bishops with di-  
vers Schollers of the  
Vniversity, one of them  
being *Paulus Vergerius*,  
having observed *Spira*  
more then any other, be-  
ing continually conver-  
sant with him, told him  
his estate was such, as ra-  
ther stood in need of prai-  
er then advice; and there-  
fore desired him to pray  
with him in the Lords



Prayer; *Spira* consented,  
and he began.

Our Father which art in  
heaven,) then breaking  
forth into teares, he stop-  
ped; but they said, It is  
well, your grief is a good  
signe:,, I bewaile (said  
,, he) my miserie, for I  
,, perceiue I am forsaken  
,, of God, and cannot call  
,, to him from my heart,  
as I was wont to do; yet  
let us go on, said *Verge-  
rius*.

Thy Kingdome come;)  
,, O Lord (said *Spira*)  
,, bring mee also into this  
,, Kingdome; I beseech  
,, thee

„thee shut mee not out.  
Then coming to those  
words; *Give us this day our  
daily bread*; he added, O  
„Lord, I have enough and  
„abundance to feed this  
„carcasse of mine, but  
„there is another bread, I  
„humbly beg the bread  
„of thy grace; without  
„which, I know I am but  
„a dead man.

*Leade us not into tem-  
ptation;*) „seeing Lord  
„that I am brought into  
„temptation, helpe mee  
„Lord that I may escape;  
„the enemy hath over-  
„come; helpe mee, I be-  
D ; „seech

„ seech thee to overcome  
„ this cruell Tyrant.

These things hee spake  
with a mournfull voice,  
the teares trickling down  
abundantly; and expres-  
sing such affection and  
passion, as turned the  
bowels of those there  
present, with griefe and  
compunction; they then  
turning to *Spira*, said:  
You know that none can  
call *Christ Iesus the Lord*,  
but by the Holie Ghost:  
you must therefore think  
of your selfe according to  
that soft affection, which  
you expresse in your  
prayers,

prayers, inferring thereby that God hath not wholly cast you off; or bereaved you of his Spirit utterly.

*I perceive (said Spira) that I call on him to my eternall damnation; for I tell you againe, it is a new and unheard of example that you finde in me: if Iudas (said they) had but outlived his dayes, which by nature he might have done; hee might have repented, and Christ would have received him to mercie; and yet hee sinned most grievously*  
D 4      against



against his Master, which  
did so esteeme of him, as  
to honour him with the  
dignitie of an *Apostle*, and  
did maintaine and feed  
him : Hee answered ,  
„ Christ did also feed and  
„ honour mee, neither yet  
„ is my fault one jot lesse  
„ then that of his ; be-  
„ cause it is not more ho-  
„ nour to bee personally  
„ present with *Christ* in  
„ the flesh , then to be in  
„ his presence now by il-  
„ lumination of his holy  
„ Spirit : and besides , I  
„ denie that ever *Judas*  
„ could have repented,  
how



„ how long soever he had  
„ lived; for grace was  
„ quite taken from him,  
„ as it is now from me.

O *Spira* (said they) you  
know you are in a spiri-  
tuall desertion; you must  
therefore not beleeve what  
Satan suggests; he was  
ever a lyar from the be-  
ginning, and a meere Im-  
postour, and will cast a  
thousand lying fancies in-  
to your minde, to beguile  
you withall; you must ra-  
ther beleeve those whom  
you judge to be in a good  
estate, and more able to  
discerne of you then your  
self;

selfe; beleeve us, and wee tell you, that God will be mercifull unto you.

*O here is the knot (said Spira) I would I could beleeve; But I cannot.*

Then he began to reckon up what fearefull dreames and visions, hee was continually troubled withall; that hee saw the devils come flocking into his Chamber, and about his bed, terrifying him with strange noises; that these were not fancies, but that hee saw them as really as the standers by; and that  
besides

besides these outward  
terrors he felt continually  
a racking torture of his  
minde, and a continuall  
butchery of his consci-  
ence, being the very pro-  
per pangs of the damned  
wights in hell.

Cast off these fancies  
(said Gribauldus) these are  
but illusions, humble your  
selfe in the presence of  
God, and praise him.

„ The dead praise not  
„ the Lord (answered he)  
„ nor they that go down  
„ into the pit : wee that  
„ are drowned in de-  
„ spaire, are dead and  
„ are

Psal. 6. 5.

„ are alreadie gone down  
„ into the pit : what hell  
„ can there be worse then  
„ desperation ; or what  
„ greater punishment : the  
„ gnawing ~~worme~~, un-  
„ quenchable fire, hor-  
„ rour, confusion, and  
„ (which is worse then  
„ all ) desperation it selfe  
„ continually tortures me,  
„ and now I count my  
„ present estate worse  
„ then if my soule (sepa-  
„ rated from my bodie)  
„ were with *Iudas* and  
„ the rest of the damned;  
„ and therefore, I now  
„ desire rather to be there,  
„ then



,, then thus to live in the  
,, bodie.

One being present, repeated certain words out of the *Psalmes*: If thy children forsake my Law and walk not in my judgments, I will visit their transgressions with rods, and their iniquities with stripes; neverthelesse my loving kindnesse I will not utterly take from them, nor suffer my faithfulnessse to faile: Marke this, O Spira, my Covenant I will not break.

*Psal. 89.*  
30.

*These promises (said Spira) belong onely to the elect.*



elect, which if tempted, may fall into sin, but are againe lifted up and recovered out: as the Propbet saith, though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast downe, for the Lord upholdeth him: Therefore Peter could rise, for he was Elected, but the reprobate when they fall cannot rise againe, as appeares in Cain, Saule, and Iudas: God deales one way with the Elect, and another way with Reprobates.

The next day he prayed with them in the Latine tongue, and that with excellent affection, as outwardly

wardly appeared, blessed  
 bee God (said *Vergerius*)  
 these are no signes of e-  
 ternall reprobation: you  
 must not, O *Spira*, seeke  
 out the secret counsels of  
 Gods election and re-  
 probation, for no man  
 can know so long as hee  
 lives, whether by his  
 good or bad deeds, hee  
 bee worthie of Gods love  
 or anger: doe you not  
 know that the Prophet  
*David* complained, that  
 God had cast off his  
 Soule.

*Eccles. 9. 1.*  
*Psal. 88.*  
*14.*

I know all this (quoth  
*Spira*) I know the mercoies  
 of

of God are infinite, and do  
surpasse the finnes of the  
whole world, and that they  
are effectuell to all that be-  
leeve, but this faith, and this  
hope, is the gift of God; O  
that he would give it mee!  
but it is as impossible as to  
drinke up the Sea at a  
draught: as for that of So-  
lomon, if he had ever tri-  
ed that which I feele by woe-  
full experience, hee would  
never have spoken as he did;  
but the truth is, never had  
mortall man, such an evi-  
dent experience of Gods an-  
ger and hatred against him,  
as I have, you that are in a  
good

good estate, thinke repentance and faith to be workes of great facilitie, and therefore you thinke it an easie matter to perswade a man to beleeeve: the whole need not the Physician; and he that is well, can soone give counsel to such as are ill; but this is the hell to me, my heart is hardned, I cannot beleeeve; many are called, but few are chosen.

Vpon what grounds (said they) do you conceive so ill an opinion of your self?

„ I once did know God  
„ to be my Father, not  
onely



⁊ onely by creation; but  
,, by regeneration, I knew  
,, him by his beloved  
,, Sonne, the author and  
,, finisher of our Salvati-  
,, on; I could pray to him,  
,, and hope for pardon of  
,, sinnes from him; I had  
,, a taste of his sweet-  
,, nesse, peace, and com-  
,, fort: now contrarily,  
,, I know God not as a  
,, Father but as an enemy;  
,, what more? my heart  
,, hates God, and seekes to  
,, get above him: I have  
,, nothing else to flie to  
,, but terroure and despair.  
Belike you think then  
(said



(said they) that those  
who have the earnest and  
first fruits of Gods Spirit,  
may notwithstanding fall  
away?

„ The judgements of  
„ God are a deepe abyffe,  
„ (*said he*) wee are soone  
„ drowned if we enter in-  
„ to them; he that thinks  
„ he standeth, let him take  
„ heed lest he fall: as for  
„ my selfe, I know I am  
„ false backe; and that  
„ I once did know the  
„ truth; though it may  
„ bee not so thoroughly: I  
„ know not what else to  
„ say, but that I am one of  
„ that

„that number, which  
 „God hath threatned to  
 „teare in pieces.

Say not so ( answered  
 they ) for God may come,  
 though at the last houre;  
 keep hold therefore, at the  
 least by hope.

„ This (*quoth he*) is my  
 „ case, I tell you I cannot,  
 „ God hath deprived mee  
 „ of hope; this brings ter-  
 „ ror to my minde, and  
 „ pines this bodie which  
 „ now is so weake, as it  
 „ cannot performe the se-  
 „ verall offices thereof:  
 „ for as the Elect have the  
 „ Spirit testifying that  
 „ they

„ they are the sonnes of  
„ God, so the Reprobates  
„ even while they live, do  
„ often feele a worme in  
„ their conscience, where-  
„ by they are condemned  
„ alreadie: and therefore  
„ as soone as I perceived  
„ this wound inflicted on  
„ my minde and will, I  
„ knew that I wanted the  
„ gifts of saving grace,  
„ and that I was utterly  
„ undone God chasteneth 1. Cor.  
„ his children with tem- 11. 33.  
„ porarie afflictions, that Rom. 1.  
„ they may come as gold 28.  
„ out of the fire; but pu-  
„ nisheth the wicked  
„ with

„ with blindnesse in their  
„ understandings, & hard-  
„ nesse of heart; and woe  
„ be to such; from whom  
„ God takes his holy Spi-  
„ rit.

Here one rebuked him,  
and told him, he gave too  
much credit to sence, that  
hee was not to beleeve  
himselſe, but rather him  
that was in a good estate,  
and I testifie to you (said  
he) that God will be mer-  
cifull to you.

Nay (answered he) for  
because I am in this ill e-  
state; therefore can I beleeve  
nothing but what is contrary

to



to mysalvation and comfort;  
but you that are so confident  
of your good estate, look that  
it bee true, for it is no such  
small matter to be assured of  
sinceritie: a man had need  
bee exceeding strongly  
grounded in the Truth, be-  
fore hee can bee able to af-  
firme such a matter as you  
now doe; it is not the per-  
formance of a few outward  
duties, but a mightie con-  
stant labour, with all inten-  
tion of heart and affection;  
with full desire and endea-  
vour, continually to set forth  
Gods glorie; there must bee  
neither feare of Legates,  
Inqui-



Inquisitors, Prisons, nor any death whatsoever; manie thinke themselves happy that are not; it is not euerie one that saith, Lord, Lord; that shall goe to heaven.

They came another day and found him with his eyes shut, as if hee had beene drowzie, and verie loath to discourse; at which time there came in also a grave man from Cittadella, who demanded of Spira, if hee knew him, or not; he lifting up his eye-lids and not suddenly remembering him,

the

the man said to him; I am  
Presbyter *Antonie Fonta-*  
*nina*; I was with you at  
Venice, some eight weeks  
since: „ O cursed day  
„ (said *Spira*) O cursed  
„ day! O that I had ne-  
„ ver gone thither, would  
„ God I had then dy-  
„ ed!

Afterwards came in a  
Priest called *Barnardinu-*  
*us Sardonius*: bringing  
with him a booke of Ex-  
orcismes, to conjure this  
devill: whom when *Spira*  
saw, shaking his head hee  
said:

„ I am verily perswa-  
E „ ded

„ded indeed, that God  
„hath left mee to the  
„power of the devills:  
„but such they are, as  
„are not to bee found in  
„your Litanie: neither  
„will they be cast out by  
spels. The Priest pro-  
ceeding in his intended  
purpose; with a strange  
uncouth gesture, and a  
loud voice, adjured the  
Spirit to come into *Spi-  
ra's* tongue, and to an-  
swer. *Spira* deriding his  
fruitlesse labour, with a  
sigh turned from him.  
A Bishop being there  
present, said to *Spira*,  
brother

brother God hath put  
vertue into the Word and  
Sacraments: and we have  
used the one meanes, and  
finde not that effect  
which wee desire: shall  
we trie the efficacie of the  
Sacraments, surely if you  
take it as a true Christian  
ought to receive, the body  
and bloud of Christ, it  
will proove a soveraigne  
medicine for your sicke  
soule.

„ This I cannot doe  
„ ( answered hee ) for  
„ they that have no right  
„ to the promises, have



1. Cor.  
11. 29.

„no right to the seales:  
 „the Eucharist was ap-  
 „pointed onely for be-  
 „leevers : if wee have  
 „not faith, wee eate and  
 „drinke judgement to  
 „our selves : I received it  
 „about a moneth since,  
 „but I did not well in so  
 „doing, for I tooke it  
 „by constraint, and so  
 „I took it to my deeper  
 „condemnation.

Here *Vergerius* began  
 to importune him ear-  
 nestly to beware, that  
 hee did not wilfully resist  
 grace, and put himself out  
 of



of heaven : charging him  
vehemently , by all the  
love that was betweene  
them : by the love which  
hee bare to his children,  
yea to his owne soule:  
that hee would set him-  
selfe seriously, to returne  
to that faith and hope,  
which once hee had  
in the death of Christ,  
with many such like  
words : *Spira* having  
heard much of the like  
matter formerly : and be-  
ing somewhat mo-  
ved, said, ,, You doe but  
,, repeat *Vergerius*, what  
,, should I hope? why  
,, should

„should I beleeve? God  
„hath taken faith from  
„mee: shew mee then  
„whither I shall goe:  
„shew mee an haven  
„whereto I shall retire:  
„you tell mee of Gods  
„mercies, when as God  
„hath cast mee off: you  
„tell mee of Christs in-  
„tercession, I have de-  
„nied him: you com-  
„mand mee to beleeve,  
„I say I cannot: you  
„bring mee no com-  
„fort: your command  
„is as impossible for mee  
„to obey, as to keepe  
„the Morall Law. If  
„you

„ you should perswade  
„ one to love God, with  
„ all his heart, soule and  
„ strength ; and God  
„ gives him not the  
„ power, can hee per-  
„ forme your desire?  
„ doth not the Church  
„ teach us to sing; direct  
„ us, O Lord, to love thy  
„ Commandments? hy-  
„ pocrites say that they  
„ love God with all  
„ their heart, but they  
„ lye: for my part, I will  
„ not lye, but tell you  
„ plainly; such is my  
„ case, that though you  
„ should never so much

so much importune mee  
,, to hope or beleeve,  
,, though I desire it, yet  
,, I cannot: for God (as  
,, a punishment of my  
,, wickednesse) hath ta-  
,, ken away from me all  
,, his saving graces;  
,, faith, hope, and all:  
,, I am not the man there-  
,, fore that you take  
,, mee for: belike you  
,, thinke I delight in  
,, this estate; if I could  
,, conceive but the least  
,, sparke of hope of a  
,, better estate hereaf-  
,, ter, I would not re-  
,, fuse to endure the  
,, most

„most heauie weight  
„of the wrath of that  
„great God; yea, for  
„twenty thousand yeers,  
„so that I might at  
„length attaine to the  
„end of that miserie,  
„which I now know  
„will bee eternall; but  
„I tell you, my will  
„is wounded: who  
„longs more to be-  
„leeve then I doe? but  
„all the ground worke  
„of my hope is quite  
„gone; for if the te-  
„stimonies of holy  
„Scripture bee true (as  
„they are most certainly  
E 5 true)



„true) is not this as  
 „true: whosoever de-  
 „nyes mee before men,  
 „him (*saith Christ*) will  
 „I denie before my Fa-  
 „ther which is in hea-  
 „ven? is not this proper-  
 „ly my case, as if it had  
 „purposely beene in-  
 „tended against this ve-  
 „ry person of mine? and  
 „I pray you, what shall  
 „become of such as  
 „Christ denyeth; seeing  
 „there is no other  
 „Name under heaven,  
 „whereby you looke to  
 „bee saved? what saith  
 „Saint *Paul* to the  
 „*Hebrews*?

„ *Hebrewes* : It is im- Heb. 6  
„ possible for those who  
„ were once enlightned,  
„ and have tasted of the  
„ heavenly gift, and were  
„ made partakers of the  
„ Holie Ghost, if they  
„ fall away, to be renew-  
„ ed to repentance, what  
„ can bee more plaine a-  
„ gainst mee : Is not that  
„ Scripture also ; if wee  
„ sinne wilfully after and 10. 26  
„ wee have received the  
„ Knowledge of the  
„ truth, there remaineth  
„ no more sacrifice for  
„ sinne ; but a certaine  
„ looking for of judge-  
ment :

1 Pet. 2. 21

ment : the Scripture  
speakes of mee, Saint  
*Paul* meanes me, Saint  
*Peter* tells me, it had  
been better I had not  
knowne the way of  
Righteousnesse, then  
after I have knowne,  
to turne from the holy  
commandement : if it  
had beene better I had  
not knowne, and yet  
then my condemna-  
tion had beene most  
certaine : doe you not  
see evidently, that I  
have wilfully denyed  
the knowne truth ;  
may justly expect not  
only

„ onely damnation, but  
„ worse, if worse may  
„ bee imagined? God  
„ will have mee under-  
„ goe the just punish-  
„ ment of my sinne, and  
„ make mee an example  
„ of his wrath for your  
„ sakes.

The companie pre-  
sent, admired his dis-  
course, so grievously ac-  
cusing himselfe of his  
fore past life: so gravely  
and wisely dilating, con-  
cerning the judgements  
of God, that they then  
were convinced, that  
it was not frenzie or  
madnesse,

madnesse, that had possessed him: and being as it were, in admiration of his estate, Spira proceeded againe in this manner, *Take heed to yourselves, it is no light or easie matter to bee a Christian; it is not Baptisme, or reading of the Scriptures, or boasting of faith in Christ (though even these are good) that can proove one to bee an absolute Christian: you know what I said before, there must bee a conformitie in life, a Christian must bee strong, unconquerable,*

*not.*



not carrying an obscure  
profession, but resolute;  
expressing the image of  
Christ; and holding out  
against all opposition to  
the last breath: hee must  
give all diligence by righ-  
teousnesse, and holinesse, to  
make his calling and ele-  
ction sure: manie there are  
that snatch at the promises  
in the Gospel, as if they  
undoubtedly did belong to  
them, and yet they remaine  
sluggish, and carelesse,  
and beeing flattered by  
the things of this present  
world, they passe in their  
course in quietnesse and  
secu-

Luk 6.

securitie, as if they were the  
 onely happie men; whom ne-  
 verthelesse the Lord in his  
 providence hath ordained to  
 eternall wrath; as you may  
 see in S. Lukes rich man,  
 thus it was with me, therefore  
 take heed.

Then came one of his  
 Nephews and offered  
 him some sustenance,  
 which he disdainfully re-  
 fusing, so moved the yong  
 mans choler, that he char-  
 ged him with hypocrisie  
 and dissimulation, or  
 frenzie; to whom Spi-  
 ra gravely answering,  
 said:

You

You may interpret the matter as you will; but I am sure, I am not onely the Actor, but the argument, and matter of the Tragedie; I would it were frenzie, either fained or true; for if it were fained, I could put it off at pleasure; if it were a real frenzie, yet there was some hope left of Gods mercie, whereas now there is none, for I know that God hath pronounced mee an enemy, and guiltie of high Treason against his Majestie; I am a cast-away, a vassaille of wrath: yet dare  
you

you call it dissembling and frenzie; and can mocke at the formidable example of the heavie wrath of God, that should teach you feare and terrour; but it is naturall to the flesh, either out of malice or ignorance, to speake perversly of the workes of God, the naturall man discerneth not of the things that are of God, because they are spiritually discerned.

How can this be (said Gribauldus) that you can thus excellently discourse of the judgments of God, and of the

the graces of his holie Spirit, that you finde the want of them, and earnestly desire them; and yet you thinke you are utterly deprived of them?

*Take this for certaine (said hee) I want the maine grace of all, and that which is absolutely necessarie; and God doth many times extort most true and strange testimonies of his Majesties justice and mercie; yea out of the mouthes of verie reprobates, for even Iudas, after hee had betrayed his Master,*



Mat. 27. 4. Master, was constrained to confesse his sinne, and to justifie the innocencie of Christ; and therefore if I doe the like, it is no new or strange matter: God hath taken faith from mee, and left mee other common gifis, for my deeper condemnation; by how much the more I remember what I had, and heare others discourse of what they have, by so much the more is my torment, in that I know what I want, and how there is no way to bee relieved.

Thus spake hee, the  
teares

teares all the while  
trickling downe; pro-  
fessing that his pangs  
were such, as that the  
damned wights in hell  
endure not the like mi-  
serie; that his estate was  
worse, then that of Cain  
or Judas; and therefore  
hee desired to die: yet  
behold (saith hee) the  
Scriptures are accomplish-  
ed in mee; they shall desire  
to die, and death shall flie Rev. 9 6.  
from them. And verily,  
hee seemed exceedingly  
to feare, lest his life  
should bee drawne out  
to a longer threed: and  
finding

finding no ease, or rest,  
ever and anon cried out:  
O miserable wretch! O mis-  
erable wretch! then turning  
to the Companie, hee be-  
fought them in this ma-  
ner.

O Brethren, take a di-  
ligent heed to your life;  
make more account of the  
gifts of Gods Spirit then I  
have done, learne to be-  
ware my miserie, thinke not  
you are assured Christians,  
because you understand  
something of the Gospel;  
take heed you grow not  
secure on that ground; bee  
constant and immoveable  
in

in the maintaining of your  
profession, confesse even un-  
till death if you bee called  
thereto: hee that loveth fa-  
ther, mother, brothers, si-  
sters, sonnes, daughters, kin-  
dred, houses, lands, more  
then Christ, is not worthy of  
him. Luk. 9. 26.

These words (said  
they) doe not sound like  
the words of a wicked re-  
probate.

I doe but herein imi-  
tate (said Spira) the rich  
Glutton in the Gospel, who  
though in hell; yet was  
carefull that his brethren  
should not come to that  
place



*place of torment : and I  
say to you Brethren , take  
heed of this miserable estate  
wherein I am.*

Then turning him-  
selfe to certaine young  
men that were present,  
hee desired them to con-  
ceive him aright , I  
,, do not speake this , to  
,, derogate from the cer-  
,, taintie of saving faith,  
,, and the promises of  
,, the Gospel , for they  
,, are most sure ; but  
,, take heed of relying  
,, on that Faith that  
,, works not a holy and  
,, unblameable life , wor-  
thy



„thie of a beleever;  
„credit mee; so it will  
„faile, I have tryed it:  
„I presumed I had got-  
„ten the right faith, I  
„preached it to others,  
„I had all places of  
„Scripture in memorie,  
„that might support it:  
„I thought my selfe  
„sure; and in the meane  
„time, living impious-  
„ly and carelesly, be-  
„hold now the judge-  
„ments of God have o-  
„vertaken mee, not to  
„correction, but to con-  
„demnation; and now  
„you would have mee

F

„to

## A Relation of

„ to beleeve, but it will  
 „ not bee; for I feele  
 „ too late; that good  
 „ things I belong onely  
 „ to such as are good;  
 „ whose finnes are co-  
 „ vered with Christs  
 „ death and blood, as  
 „ with a vaile, and  
 „ guarded with his righ-  
 „ teous merits from the  
 „ flood of Gods wrath,  
 „ even as with a mightie  
 „ wall; lest miserable  
 „ mortals should be  
 „ swallowed up with  
 „ the greatnesse of their  
 „ finnes. But as for  
 „ mee, I have as it were

„ wi

„wilfully with mine  
„hands pulled downe  
„this rampire; behinde  
„which I might have  
„rested in safetie; and  
„now are the swelling  
„waters come even to my  
„soule: and I am cast  
„away.

One of his familiar  
friends chanced to say,  
that certainly hee was o-  
uercome with melan-  
cholie; which being o-  
uerheard, *Spira* answer-  
ed;

„Well; bee it so, see-  
„ing you will needs  
„have it so; for thus  
F 2 „also

„also is Gods wrath  
 „manifested against mee  
 „in that hee hath taken  
 „from mee the use of  
 „mine own understanding  
 „and reason, so as I  
 „can neither rightly  
 „steeme and judge of  
 „my distemper, nor  
 „hope of remedie: you  
 „see Brethren, what a  
 „dangerous thing it is,  
 „to stoppe or stay in  
 „things that concerne  
 „Gods glorie, especii-  
 „ally to dissemble upon  
 „anie termes: what a  
 „fearefull thing is it to  
 „be neare, and almost a  
 „Chri-

„ Christian ! never was  
„ the like example to  
„ this of mine : and  
„ therefore if you bee  
„ wise, you will seri-  
„ ously consider thereof.  
„ Oh that God would  
„ let loose his hand from  
„ mee ; that it were with  
„ me now, as in times  
„ past ! I would scorne the  
„ threats of the most  
„ cruell Tyrants, beare  
„ torments with invin-  
„ cible resolution, and  
„ glorie in the outward  
„ profession of Christ,  
„ till I were choked in  
„ the flame, and my  
E 3 bo



„bodie consumed to a-  
„shes.

You say you are desperate, O *Spira*, (said they) why then doe you not strive with some weapon or other, violently to make an end of your life, as desperate men use to doe? Let mee have a sword (said *Spira*) why what would you doe with it (quoth they) *I cannot tell you* (said hee) *what this minde would move me to upon occasion; nor what I would doe.*

They perceiving small  
effect

effect of all this their labour; but rather that he grew worse: for the avoiding of concourse of people; for everie day seldome fewer then 20. continued with him, and to stop the course of fame, which was continually blowne abroad of him; they consult to carry him backe againe into his owne country: and those his friends that came to comfort him, began to take their leaves of him: *Vergerius* among the rest, required that at their  
F 4 parting

parting they might pray  
together with him : Spi-  
ra hardly consented,  
and as unwillingly per-  
formed : for he said,  
„ My heart is estranged  
„ from God, I cannot  
„ call him Father from  
„ my heart ; all good  
„ motions are now quite  
„ gone, my heart is full  
„ of malediction, ha-  
„ tred, and blasphemie  
„ against God ; I finde I  
„ grow more and more  
„ hardned in heart, and  
„ cannot stoope nor  
„ helpe my selfe ; your  
„ prayers for mee shall  
turne

Turne to your owne be-  
nefit, they can doe me no  
good.

*Vergerius* came to  
take his leave of him,  
whom *Spira* embracing,  
said, "Although I know  
that nothing can bring  
any benefit to mee a  
Reprobate; but that  
everie thing shall tend  
to my deeper condem-  
nation; yet I give you  
most heartie thankes,  
for your kinde office  
of love and good will;  
and the Lord returne  
it unto you with a

„plentifull increase of all  
„good.

The next day being brought downe to his intended journey, by the way looking round about him with a ghastly looke, he saw a knife lying on a Table, to which hee running hastily snatched hold of; as intending to mischief himselfe; but his friends laying hold of him, stopped him in his purpose: whereupon with indignation, hee said,  
„I would I were above  
„God



God, for I know hee  
will have no mercie on  
mee.

Thus, went hee home-  
wards, often saying, that  
he envied the condition  
of *Gain* and *Judas*: hee  
lay about eight weekes  
in this case, in a continu-  
all burning, neither de-  
siring, nor receiving a-  
nything but by force,  
and that without dis-  
gestion: so spent, that  
hee appeared a perfect  
*Anatomic*; expressing  
to the view, nothing  
but sinewes and bones;  
vehement;

vehemently raging for  
drinke, ever pining, yet  
fearefull to live long;  
dreadfull of hell, yet co-  
veting death, in a continu-  
all torment, yet his own  
tormentor: and thus con-  
suming himselfe with  
griefe and horreur, impa-  
tience, and despair; like a  
living man in Hell; he re-  
presented an extraordina-  
rie example of the justice  
and power of God: and  
thus (as farre as appear-  
eth) within a few dayes  
after his arrivall at his  
owne home, he departed  
this

this present life. Yet an  
 occasion to make us re-  
 member, *that secret things*  
*belong unto the Lord our*  
*God*; but charitie to man,  
 to teach him to hope all  
 things.

~~When we have turned  
 our eyes from the things  
 of this world to the things  
 of the world to come, we  
 shall find that the things  
 of this world are but  
 vanity and emptiness.~~

~~After the destruction  
 of Jerusalem, and as  
 the Targum reports  
 till at this day, the  
 Jews have not yet  
 returned to their  
 country.~~

**Ex**

Extraordinarie exam-  
 ples of divine Ju-  
 stice, God never intend-  
 ed for a nine dayes  
 wonder: else would hee  
 when hee exemplifi'd  
*Lots* wise have turned  
 her into a statue of melt-  
 ing snow, not of lasting  
 salt; which stood as  
*Iosephus* tells us, till his  
 age, after the destruction  
 of Jerusalem: and as  
 some Travellers report,  
 till at this day: *ut quod-*  
*dam:*

dam hominibus præstaret  
condimentum quo sapiant  
unde illud capeatur ex-  
emplum; Aug. de civitat.  
Dei. lib. 16. cap. 30. for a  
season against corrup-  
tion, a preservative a-  
gainst Apostacie. This  
Tragedie, when fresh  
and new, was the con-  
version and confirma-  
tion of sundrie Wor-  
thies: *Vergorius* a daily  
spectator thereof, forsa-  
king a rich Bishopricke  
of *Iustinopolis*, and tents  
of Antichrist; went  
to *Basil*, and dyed a  
worthy



worthy Protestant: manie Nations had Eyewitnesses of their owne Students, then in the Vniuersitie of Padua who penned the Storie, the Copies whereof are frequently revived: our English ones were verie defective, and now worne out of shoppes and hands, sundrie manuscripts of this abroad imperfect; which moved me to compare this labour of a worthie Gentleman (who faithfully translated it out of  
*Italian*

Italian, French, and  
Dutch Letters) with the  
Latine of Caelius Secun-  
dus, Curio, Matthew Gri-  
bauldus, professors of  
the Civill Law in Pa-  
dua; Sigismund Gelous a  
Transilvanian, Henricus  
Scotus, all daily visitors  
of Spira, and finde it ac-  
cord with them. Touch-  
ing Spiraes person, I  
finde (most learned wri-  
ters) to incline to the  
right, and hopefull  
hand: moved by his  
sweet, humble, and cha-  
ritable speeches: some  
few desperate ones ex-  
cepted,

cepted, that fell from him in some little agonies, which kept him fasting and watching about six moneths space, eating nothing but what was forced downe his throat. The summe of *Calvins* and *Borrhaus* their counsels (who writ largely of the use of this pattern) is that all learne to take heed of backe-sliding; which Gods foule abhorres; and not to dally with Conscience, and hell on earth, if justly incensed; more to be feared then

then the Spanish Inquisition, or all the Strapadoes and torments in the world; and to take heed of *Spira's* principall Errors; which were to dispute with Satan over busily in time of weakenesse: especially to reason, and conclude from present sence: to Gods past Reprobation, and future Damnation: both which is hard, if possible for any man to determine in his owne, much more in others cases: so commending thee

thee to his grace who is  
 able to establish thee to  
 the end: I bid thee fare-  
 well, and hope well,  
 while the space of Grace  
 lasteth, *Dum spiras spera:*  
 so mayest thou take good  
 and no hurt, by the read-  
 ing of this terrible exam-  
 ple.

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**FINIS.**

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